

Leslie Marmon Silko: *Gardens in the Dunes*

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Cultural Motifs

- **Lizard: promotes dreaming, agility, and conservation.**
 - Sand Lizard People: almost extinct.
- **Plants and gardens (14-5, 78-79, 83, 96)**
- **Snake: creation & rebirth (36, 100)**
- **Grandma-Spider (Thought Woman) and Grandma Fleet (46, 47, 51)**
- **Yaqui story of Cat and Monkey (104, 106)**
 - Popul Vuh: monkey-men (84)
- **Santeria: syncretic blend of Native / Catholic / African religions (87, 88-89)**

- **Forty-niners and Native Women (16)**
- **Chemehuevi History**
- **U. S. Policies of Extinction, Containment & Assimilation**
 - Buffalo, Battles, and Reservations (16-17)
 - Parker, AZ: Colorado River Indian Tribe Reservation
 - Boarding Schools (21, 67-8, 106, 111)
- **Wovoka & the Ghost Dance (22, 24, 32, 44-5)**
- **Christians and Mormons (16, 29, 38, 44-45, 49, 60)**
- **Bureau of Indian Affairs**
 - Treaty Period
 - BIA Federal Indian Trust
 - U. S. Marshall's Wounded Knee 1873
 - American Indian Movement
 - AIM's Wounded Knee 1973

Encounters & Policies



Barack Obama's [Position](#)

Grandma Spider: Thought Woman

- In the Keres culture of Acoma Pueblo, the cacique bore the title of Inside Chief, signifying his power within the village. Beyond the pueblo walls, power passed to one or more war leaders, or Outside Chiefs, who were responsible for constructing defenses and keeping watch against invaders.

They say the earth was formed when the Great Father Uchtsiti, Lord of the Sun, hurled a clot of his own blood into the heavens. In the soil of this new world, he set germinating the souls of two sisters, the Corn Mothers, who were raised to maturity by a spirit called Thought Woman. When the time was ripe, Thought Woman gave the two sisters baskets filled with seeds and showed them the way to the earth's surface. Corn was the first thing they planted. They learned to cultivate and harvest it, to grind and cook it, and to make daily offerings of cornmeal and pollen to their father, Uchtsiti. These lessons the Acomans would practice each day of their lives.

From the *Popul Vuh* (Lewis Spence)

- Over a universe wrapped in the gloom of a dense and primeval night passed the god Hurakan, the mighty wind. He called out "earth," and the solid land appeared. The chief gods took counsel; they were Hurakan, Gucumatz, the serpent covered with green feathers, and Xpiyacoc and Xmucane, the mother and father gods. As the result of their deliberations animals were created. But as yetman was not. To supply the deficiency the divine beings resolved to create mannikins carved out of wood. But these soon incurred the displeasure of the gods, who, irritated by their lack of reverence, resolved to destroy them. Then by the will of Hurakan, the Heart of Heaven, the waters were swollen, and a great flood came upon the mannikins of wood. They were drowned and a thick resin fell from heaven. The bird Xecotcovach tore out their eyes; the bird Camulatz cut off their heads; the bird Cotzbalam devoured their flesh; the bird Tecumbalam broke their bones and sinews and ground them into powder. Because they had not thought on Hurakan, therefore the face of the earth grew dark, and a pouring rain commenced, raining by day and by night. Then all sorts of beings, great and small, gathered together to abuse the men to their faces. The very household utensils and animals jeered at them, their mill-stones, their plates, their cups, their dogs, their hens. Said the dogs and hens, "Very badly have you treated us, and you have bitten us. Now we bite you in turn." Said the mill-stones (metates), "Very much were we tormented by you, and daily, daily, night and day, it was squeak, screech, screech,] for your sake. Now you shall feel our strength, and we will grind your flesh and make meal of your bodies." And the dogs upbraided the mannikins because they had not been fed, and tore the unhappy images with their teeth. And the cups and dishes said, "Pain and misery you gave us, smoking our tops and sides, cooking us over the fire burning and hurting us as if we had no feeling. Now it is your turn, and you shall burn." Then ran the mannikins hither and thither in despair. They climbed to the roofs of the houses, but the houses crumbled under their feet; they tried to mount to the tops of the trees, but the trees hurled them from them; they sought refuge in the caverns, but the caverns closed before them. Thus was accomplished the ruin of this race, destined to be overthrown. And it is said that their posterity are the little monkeys who live in the woods.

U.S. Indian Policy History (according to the BIA)

- **"Congress ended treaty-making with Indian tribes in 1871. Since then, relations with Indian groups have been formalized and/or codified by Congressional acts, Executive Orders, and Executive Agreements."**
- **"Between 1778, when the first treaty was made with the Delawares, to 1871, when Congress ended the treaty-making period, the United States Senate ratified 370 treaties. At least 45 others were negotiated with tribes but were never ratified by the Senate."**
- **"The treaties that were made often contain commitments that have either been fulfilled or subsequently superseded by Congressional legislation." (www.bia.gov)**
